

# Education

## MANITOBA

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### Engaging All Students in Learning A Message from the Minister

**M**anitoba Education is committed to ensuring the educational success of all students. We recognize that there is a need to be innovative as we respond to the challenges that affect student engagement and academic achievement. It is our responsibility as a province to work with all our partners, including school divisions, teachers, and parents, to create opportunities for all students to succeed and grow in safe and caring learning environments.

Our approach to creating these learning environments is deeply informed by research that allows us to identify areas of focus as well as to track progress. This is crucial if we are to close educational gaps, especially for those students who have historically been less successful in our schools. Research illustrates that all students can benefit from having a meaningful relationship with an adult and can achieve success when they are provided with engaging and relevant learning experiences and multiple pathways.

There are many different ways in which Manitoba Education is working with its educational partners to develop initiatives that respond effectively to the changing educational landscape and that ensure all students experience success in our schools. Particularly, there is the new Learning to Age 18 legislation, which is designed to re-engage students who have left or who are at risk of leaving school. This legislation provides these students with additional pathways and opportunities to graduate or achieve other educational, vocational, or personal goals. To support school divisions with this new legislation, Manitoba Education introduced the Learning to Age 18 Coordinator Grant, which is focused on enhancing existing programming and creating new programming to keep students connected to the learning environment.

Research-informed strategies help schools to track at-risk learners through early warning systems. The Tell Them From Me survey is another source of data that allows Grades 4 to 12 students to provide input anonymously about school safety and school improvement. The survey data can then

be used by school administrators to ensure that the school is providing the safest and most welcoming environment for all students.

Our commitment to students extends to our belief that parents, families, and communities play an important role in student engagement and achievement, as reflected in proposed legislation to strengthen community schools. We continue to engage in discussions with the Premier's Advisory Council on Education, Poverty and Citizenship on ways for students to succeed in our system, including implementing credit recovery programs and expanding cooperative education opportunities.

Manitoba Education acknowledges that meeting the needs of all learners requires a collective commitment, engaging multiple partners and using multiple approaches. We believe in the strength of our teachers, our families and communities, and, most importantly, our students as they work together to make school a place where all students are respected and able to learn and succeed in supportive and enriching learning environments.

Nancy Allan  
Minister of Education

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## Curriculum Update

Several projects are underway in the 2013/2014 school year to develop, revise, and implement new curricula for the Kindergarten to Grade 12 English Program and the Senior Years Technology Education Program.

The Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment Branch continues to provide workshops for curriculum implementation and related professional learning. Information about workshops is posted on the workshop registration system at <<http://web16.gov.mb.ca/workshops>>.

### Kindergarten to Grade 12 English Program

Curriculum	Voluntary Implementation Dates	System-Wide Implementation Dates
Grade 12 Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability	2011–2013	2013–2014
K–Grade 12 English as an Additional Language (EAL)/Literacy, Academics, and Language (LAL) Curriculum Framework	2013–2014	2014–2015
English as an Additional Language: Stages 1–2: Senior Years	2014–2015	2015–2016
English as an Additional Language: Stage 3: Senior Years	2014–2015	2015–2016
English as an Additional Language: Literacy, Academics, and Language (LAL-1) (Grade 9)	2011–2014	2014–2015
English as an Additional Language: Literacy, Academics, and Language (LAL-2) (Grade 9)	2011–2014	2014–2015
Reading is Thinking Framework	2012–2013	2013–2014
Dance 9–12	2013–2014	2014–2015
Drama 9–12	2013–2014	2014–2015
Music 9–12	2013–2014	2014–2015
Visual Arts 9–12	2013–2014	2014–2015
Cinema as a Witness to Modern History	2013–2014	2014–2015

### Senior Years Technology Education Program

Curriculum	Voluntary Implementation Dates	System-Wide Implementation Dates
Carpentry: 9	2012–2013	2013–2014
Design Drafting: 9	2012–2013	2013–2014
Print Media: 9	2012–2013	2013–2014
Culinary Arts: 9	2012–2013	2013–2014
Hairstyling: 9	2012–2013	2013–2014

*continued*

### Senior Years Technology Education Program (continued)

Curriculum	Voluntary Implementation Dates	System-Wide Implementation Dates
Automotive Technology: 9	2012–2013	2013–2014
Sustainable Energy 9–11*	2012–2013	2013–2016
Carpentry: 10–12*	2013–2015	2014–2017
Design Drafting: 10–12*	2013–2015	2014–2017
Print Media: 10–12*	2013–2015	2014–2017
Culinary Arts: 10–12*	2013–2015	2014–2017
Hairstyling: 10–12*	2013–2015	2014–2017
Automotive Technology: 10–12*	2013–2014	2014–2017
Welding Technology: 9	2013–2014	2014–2015
Baking and Pastry Arts: 9	2013–2014	2014–2015
Esthetics: 10	2013–2014	2014–2015
Welding Technology: 10–12*	2014–2015	2015–2018
Baking and Pastry Arts: 10–12*	2014–2015	2015–2018
Esthetics: 11–12*	2014–2015	2015–2017
Aircraft And Aerospace Technology: 9	2013–2014	2014–2015
Dental Assisting: 11	2013–2014	2014–2015
Dental Technology: 11	2013–2014	2014–2015
Heavy Duty Equipment Technician: 9	2013–2014	2014–2015
Horticulture: 9	2013–2014	2014–2015
Jewellery and Metalsmithing: 9	2013–2014	2014–2015
Machining Technology: 9	2013–2014	2014–2015
Plumbing and Pipe Trades: 9	2013–2014	2014–2015
Refrigeration and Air Conditioning: 9	2013–2014	2014–2015
Aircraft Maintenance Technology: 10–12*	2014–2015	2015–2018
Aviation and Aerospace Technology: 10–12*	2014–2015	2015–2018
Dental Assisting: 12	2014–2015	2015–2016
Dental Technology: 12	2014–2015	2015–2016
Heavy Duty Equipment Technician: 10–12*	2014–2015	2015–2018
Horticulture: 10–12*	2014–2015	2015–2018
Jewellery and Metalsmithing: 10–12*	2014–2015	2015–2018
Machining Technology: 10–12*	2014–2015	2015–2018
Plumbing and Pipe Trades: 10–12*	2014–2015	2015–2018
Refrigeration and Air Conditioning: 10–12*	2014–2015	2015–2018

For a list of compulsory curricula and stock numbers for ordering from the Manitoba Text Book Bureau, refer to <[www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/csai.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/csai.html)>.

\* Implementation to follow one grade at a time

# Touchstones® Discussions – Reflect to Express, Express to Reflect

By Florence Girouard

One of the most important skills that students need to develop is the ability to recognize their own points of view. When students are aware of their own opinions and attitudes, they are better able to put them aside—at least temporarily—to study a new idea or situation with an open mind and to better understand a previously unknown point of view. These abilities are acquired through active listening, which involves hearing what is different from and sometimes at odds with one's own view of the world and of oneself.

The Touchstones Discussion Project is a pedagogical resource that fosters the development of active-listening skills. The developers of this project maintain that differences of opinion with an author's thinking during critical reading or differences with other participants' ideas during structured discussions can bring about an awareness of one's own opinions and beliefs, sometimes for the first time.

Moreover, during discussions of carefully selected and adapted Touchstones texts, participants are encouraged to consider the extent to which the opinions they espouse are truly their own. In the process, participants discover their most deep-seated beliefs, because they are encouraged to base their discussion on facts rather than prejudices. Such activities foster the development of high-level thinking skills and help students articulate their personal understanding of any given idea.

The Bureau de l'éducation française (BEF) Division of Manitoba Education looked into whether or not schools in which the language of instruction

is French could benefit from these discussions in order to

- ▶ systematically build students' critical thinking, and thus enhance their ability to communicate effectively
- ▶ boost students' confidence in speaking French in public

Field testing of the Touchstones educational material is very telling. While teachers and students had to overcome certain difficulties (the most significant being the lack of French vocabulary and French expressions), these discussions allowed students to reflect and express their thinking in French with increased ease and confidence. The material includes a teacher's guide with thirty 45-minute lesson plans for each of the grades from 4 through 10. The material can also be used in Grades 11 and 12.

To read more (in French) on Touchstones, please visit [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/m12/eval/index.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/m12/eval/index.html).

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## Language Learning Testimonials

### Grade 11 Students

> *The Touchstones discussions helped me a lot. It's hard to explain. Before Touchstones, my oral French was terrible. Now, I am much more comfortable in French; I talk more in class and I speak French at home with my brother.*

> *In class, we are supposed to speak in French. Not all of my friends did and it was really hard to speak in French to my peers. These discussions really help us to improve our French. We gain confidence over time because we are learning that we can speak French, and speak well, in a large group discussion.*

> *Most of the time, the discussions continued after class. All of the classroom discussion was in French, so it was easier to continue in French.*

### Teachers

> *At first, the students used a lot of English words, especially with less familiar topics, but now we only occasionally hear English.*

> *I used to think that giving class time was all that was required for students to develop their oral communication skills.*

## Critical Thinking Testimonials

### Grade 11 Students

> *The Touchstones texts are interesting. I had never seen anything like them before. They present ideas that I'd never thought about. It was a new experience for me. Some were very difficult to wrap your head around, especially in a second language. At that point, our discussions focused on the complexity of the texts.*

> *It's really very useful, because we aren't taught how to develop our critical thinking at school; it's just something that is supposed to happen to everyone in their own way. Putting someone in an environment like Touchstones gives them the chance to develop new ways of thinking and to change.*

> *Everyone has their own opinions. I used to think that everyone was sort of passive at school and that no one thought about this sort of thing. I learned that everyone is just as thoughtful as I am. I used to interrupt people and impose my ideas. Now I am more respectful.*

> *We can think more creatively about our own opinions and those of others. I didn't know we could think like that. Now I challenge myself about what I think. Is it really MY opinion? Touchstones gets you to give more thought to where your opinions come from.*

> *I knew just about everyone in the class. It's the group I am with the most at school. I got to know the students better through discussion. Now we are really close. I feel more comfortable with this class than any other class.*

### Teachers

> *Beginning Grade 4 students quickly realized that they all, like adults, share the same experiences and have similar beliefs. They no longer feel alone, and they talk with their parents and friends. They wonder how the Touchstones authors could know which readings to pick to get them to reflect and talk about it.*

> *The discussions help students get to know each other better and learn from others. It is not a "my opinion, your opinion" type of sharing. It is a time for exploring others' perspectives and for opening ourselves up to new ideas and to others. Too many young people, and too many adults, suffer from the limits of their OWN experience.*

## Aboriginal Education: A Journey from Cultural Awareness to Cultural Competency

By Myra Laramee

Indigenous knowledge has been transmitted over time and through the generations. Despite this history, a gap or “void” in knowledge of Aboriginal people exists today. In Manitoba, students are increasingly being provided with opportunities to learn about Aboriginal histories, traditions, cultures, world views, and contemporary issues. These student learning opportunities, along with the curriculum and teacher resources being developed by Manitoba Education, are steps toward narrowing the gap in knowledge, one footprint at a time.

The made-in-Manitoba training kit *A Journey from Cultural Awareness to Cultural Competency*, which includes a training manual, a DVD, and a variety of other resources, is intended to provide new and experienced educators with professional learning in Aboriginal education. The training kit offers a variety of tools and strategies that may be used with different populations within school divisions (e.g., teachers, counsellors, educational assistants, administrators, parents, and even students) and at various times throughout the year. A goal of the training is to assist schools and school divisions in using these

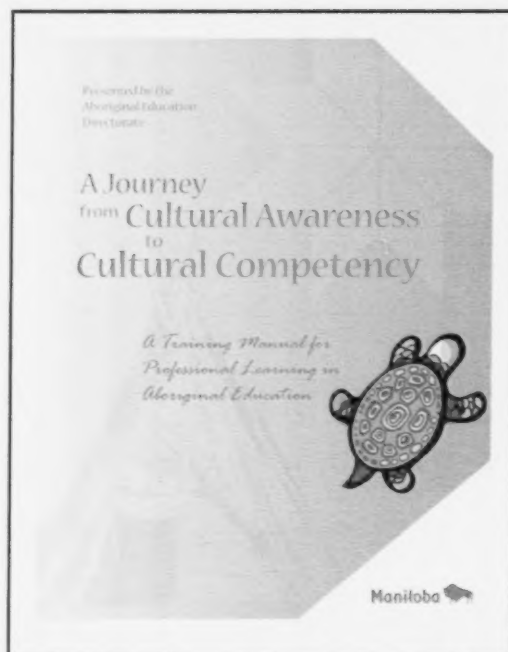
tools and strategies as part of their Aboriginal education planning and implementation.

The Journey training helps those responsible for Aboriginal education to make learning a positive experience in schools across the province. It enhances teachers' confidence while building their capacity to implement Aboriginal education strategies, including Treaty Relations Education initiatives, and teacher support and curriculum resources, such as *From Apology to Reconciliation: Residential School Survivors* (a guide and DVD for Grades 9 and 11 social studies teachers)

and *Grade 12 Current Topics in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Studies* (a curriculum document that supports the empowerment of students through exploration of the histories, traditions, cultures, world views, and contemporary issues of Indigenous peoples in Canada and worldwide).

Available since 2009, *A Journey from Cultural Awareness to Cultural Competency* has provided numerous schools and school divisions in Manitoba with training that continues to increase knowledge of Aboriginal people not only among educators, but also among their students who benefit from such learning. While teachers in training now have an opportunity to start filling the void in their knowledge by completing a required course on Aboriginal perspectives as part of their university program, Journey training will provide educators in the field with further learning support to help them gain much-needed knowledge about the history of Aboriginal people in Canada.

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# Let the Teachers Play: The Kindergarten Teacher Learning Fair

By Debra Mayer

On March 8, 2013, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Unit of Manitoba Education hosted a day of playful learning and sharing that brought together members of the Kindergarten community from every region of Manitoba, including First Nations classrooms, colony schools, and independent schools.

Together, participants celebrated play-based learning for our youngest children and acknowledged the critical role played by Kindergarten teachers in helping children make a successful transition to their formal education. A second purpose for the gathering was to invite Kindergarten teachers to provide feedback on some of the draft content for Manitoba Education's upcoming Kindergarten support document *A Time for Learning, A Time for Joy*. This resource is being redeveloped by the ECE unit, with input from Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment Branch (ICAB) and Bureau de l'éducation française (BEF) consultants, as well as eight exemplary teachers.

The learning fair was a unique opportunity to meet and establish networks with colleagues from across the province, and to see examples of good practices in Kindergarten classrooms. Superintendents were invited to nominate Kindergarten teachers who demonstrated leadership and willingness to share their division's approach to Kindergarten learning and to help shape the Kindergarten support document currently under redevelopment. Teachers were asked to touch base with other Kindergarten teachers in their divisions prior to the fair in order to gather their questions and to share what they learned at the fair once they returned to their communities and neighbourhoods.

The day was structured to maximize interaction and to build connections. Learning activities modelled the playful learning approach promoted in the *CMEC Statement on Play-Based Learning* (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada), such as working together as a team to solve eight puzzles to articulate the eight guiding principles inherent in the Kindergarten support document. Teachers were especially honoured to have in attendance Nancy Allan, Minister of Education, who was one of the signatories to the CMEC statement.

Teachers brought in a Kindergarten artifact that demonstrated something they felt proud to share, such as samples of children's work, a classroom floor plan, photo albums and scrapbooks, child portfolios, and games or other learning aids they created. Through this one-and-a-half-hour dedicated "show and tell" sharing time, the energy in the room was palpable. Over the lunch hour, further networking was facilitated via the chance to circulate through 15 displays.

Our development team Kindergarten teachers created science-fair-style displays and videos to showcase play-based learning and intentional teaching in their classrooms, while consultants and other Early Childhood Development (ECD)

partners shared information about resources available to support teachers in their important work. Later in the day, teachers and consultants especially enjoyed the chance to delve into the Kindergarten curriculum in an interactive "Conversation Café" format.

The teachers discussed instructional practices with the curriculum consultants and with one another. Writers of core sections in the support document checked key messages and validated their approaches. By incorporating teacher voices and expertise, Manitoba Education can make sure the final product is useful, meaningful, and relevant.



The inaugural learning fair was well received by all. In their evaluations of the event, participants shared comments such as the following:

- > *It is important for Kindergarten teachers to recognize the role they have in children's development and learning.*
- > *A day like this excites us to go back to our classrooms and make more joyful, playful places to learn.*
- > *[We need] more opportunities to share, network, and find support of other K teachers.... It is wonderful to meet and talk with others. Common ground is evident.*

The ECE unit especially appreciated the active involvement of ICAB, BEF, the Manitoba Education Library (which showcased its many early childhood resources), and ECD partners such as Healthy Child Manitoba, Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care, and Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre.

Based on this very successful first learning fair, the ECE unit hopes to hold biennial gatherings for the Kindergarten community.

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# Manitoba Report Card: Creating the Conditions for Critical Thinking

By Manitoba Education Staff

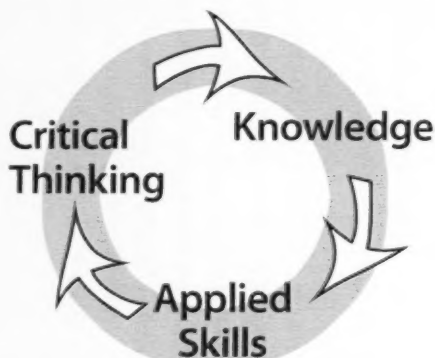
Mark Sheridan-Rabideau stated in his 2010 article "Creativity Repositioned," "If the challenge of 21st century education is to prepare future generations to address the complexities of a world they are certain to inherit, our task as educators is to create a pedagogy that empowers our students to see themselves as agents of change equipped to address the most pressing problems around the globe and across the street."

School report cards have undergone a considerable evolution since they were first introduced. They have become an informative and supportive tool of learning for all students. With the effective use of the Manitoba report card, Manitoba Education envisions that "every learner will graduate from high school with a profound sense of accomplishment, hope, and optimism."

The Manitoba report card provides parents with information specific to their child's knowledge, applied skills, and critical thinking. Although learning is integrated, reporting by subject-area categories in Grades 1 to 8 allows parents, students, and others to see where strengths and challenges exist and where learning can be improved and enriched. The resulting report card data – both quantitative and qualitative – present an opportunity for collaborative professional learning relative to teaching and assessing.

What does critical thinking look like in Manitoba's learning environments? Analysis of various indicators reveals several interesting similarities. Across subjects, when students think critically, they do more than complete a task. They exhibit a "minds-on" approach to learning. The "critical" in critical thinking may be translated as a "critique-all" habit of mind in which students

- ▶ explore and use diverse approaches to identify and solve problems
- ▶ ask questions that challenge a current condition
- ▶ allow for multiple perspectives
- ▶ compare and contrast diverse perspectives and interpretations
- ▶ determine assumptions or biases
- ▶ reconsider personal assumptions
- ▶ connect concepts



- ▶ distinguish fact from fiction
- ▶ offer opinions and interpretations with supporting details
- ▶ evaluate information and ideas from various sources
- ▶ consider the consequences of decisions
- ▶ generate ideas and possibilities
- ▶ create original works
- ▶ express their voices and ideas relative to an issue
- ▶ uncover and take a stance on inequalities

"Minds-on" learning environments are prerequisite growing conditions in which applied knowledge and imagination can flourish. In these environments, instruction and assessment focus on ways to help students develop and practise the discipline of thinking critically – a habit of mind that is fundamental to addressing present-day challenges such as sustainability, poverty, and inequity.

What does critical thinking look like relative to specific subject areas?

- ▶ In mathematics, students make connections between hands-on experiences and abstract mathematical knowledge. They design strategies to solve problems.

They analyze different points of view and make decisions based on reasoning. They ask questions about information needed to solve a given problem. They represent problems differently to confirm a solution. They apply abstract mathematics concepts to a variety of world/life contexts.

- ▶ In English and French language arts, students might ask the following questions: *Who or what is in the text? Who or what is marginalized or missing in the text? What does the author/illustrator/creator want you to think? What "story" might an alternative text tell? How do diverse perspectives and interpretations in media and other sources compare?*
- ▶ In science, students develop a critical sense of wonder and curiosity regarding scientific and technological endeavours. They engage in inquiry by posing questions, generating possible explanations, and collecting and analyzing evidence. Through science education, students are prepared to address science-related societal, economic, ethical, and environmental issues critically. A scientifically literate individual can more effectively interpret information, solve problems, make informed decisions, accommodate change, and create new knowledge.
- ▶ In arts education, students use their knowledge to create artistic works. They analyze works and performances to express and construct meaning. Through arts education, students can explore complex problems and issues and develop awareness and understanding of the multiple and diverse ways of problem solving and viewing the world.
- ▶ In social studies, students engage in inquiry and research and critically analyze evidence. They are encouraged to make informed and ethical choices when faced with the challenges of living in a pluralistic democratic society. They learn to apply their knowledge in ways that help them develop respect for the environment and a commitment to social justice and quality of life for all.

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# Learning to Age 18

By Barbara Riou

In September 2011, the Province of Manitoba amended the *Public Schools Act*, raising the age of compulsory school attendance for a student in Manitoba from 16 to 18 years, or graduation. The *Activities and Programs – Learning to Age 18 Regulation* is intended to re-engage students who are not attending school, enable them to graduate, or help them achieve other educational goals.

The new legislation requires school boards to establish policies and procedures to support students to remain engaged in school or in activities and programs that provide educational benefit. Learning to Age 18 provides for the approval of non-credit specialized alternative learning in lieu of attending school that results

in student re-engagement in school programming, education and training in preparation for employment, or the development of life skills. School divisions are responsible for developing and supervising plans for non-credit specialized alternative learning for each student with final approval provided by the Deputy Minister.



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- ▶ In physical education and health education, students demonstrate safe and functional uses of a variety of skills that enhance general fitness and aerobic activity. They make personalized plans for healthy lifestyles and show understanding of skills that promote well-being.
- ▶ In industrial arts (technology education), students make decisions, solve problems, and think critically to respond to practical problems and issues. They develop skills such as inferring, synthesizing, analyzing, and evaluating, as well as a complete range of communication skills. Students explore problems, ideas, and

concepts from investigation research to product construction and final testing and evaluation stages.

Advances in technology allow students to have almost instant access to vast amounts of information. How we engage students in using knowledge for 'big picture' purposes is of immense importance in this 21st century. Critical thinking learning environments are designed to support high levels of quality learning in ways that are respectful and, ultimately, may have the potential to contribute to problem solving for global sustainability and peace.

The Manitoba report card categories (Grades 1 to 8) provide data that

The Department recognizes that schools have been implementing strategies of their own to address local issues of attendance, truancy, and early school leaving for many years. Many schools have also put in place their own initiatives to meet the needs of at-risk learners.

Starting in 2012/2013, a new \$1.2 million Learning to Age 18 Coordinator Grant supports existing or new programming that helps to retain students who are at risk of leaving school prior to graduation, as well as helping the coordination and supervision of students in activities or programs in lieu of attending school. The new funding can also be used to support teachers and school staff as they develop alternative learning plans for students who are not attending school, and to monitor and evaluate their progress.

Starting in 2013/2014, Manitoba Education is establishing a Learning to Age 18 network to provide school divisions with support to share successes and promising practices, and to discuss challenges.

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allow school and divisional teams to continuously improve the depth of understanding and application of critical thinking in Manitoba schools. These data can help teams focus their professional learning and community partnerships on specific student learning needs. The data provided in the provincial report card present opportunities for all school teams to reflect on their learning environments and to respond, collaboratively, to enhance learning for Manitoba's students.

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## Supporting Student Success within Manitoba's Low-Income Communities

By Sheila Giesbrecht

Students who successfully complete high school have more positive life outcomes, are more engaged in civic matters, and have a positive impact within their communities. Students in low-income communities, however, have lower than average graduation rates and therefore face additional barriers to success. Improving the success of these students is an important commitment of Manitoba Education.

In 2008, the Student Success Initiative (SSI) was designed as an intervention to support students' academic success within low-income communities through in-school supports, such as credit acquisition and credit recovery supports, student support teams, transition support, and addressing learning lags. Three school divisions (Lakeshore SD, Winnipeg SD, and Kelsey SD) have participated in a three-year SSI pilot project.

The SSI has several key components that support student success. The first is a student success teacher who (in conjunction with the resource teacher) provides additional support for students who are struggling academically but have not been identified with special academic or behavioural challenges. These supports include credit recovery classes, extended learning time for students, and help in addressing learning lags that students face. This teacher may also provide non-academic supports such as social supports, support for the transition from middle to high school, and liaisons with guardians/family.

A second key component of the SSI is effective tracking of student outcomes. Participant schools use an early warning system to track and monitor students. Attendance data, credit acquisition data, and behavioural information are tracked and combined for each student. This information is monitored by the student success team, which identifies students who are academically "on-track" and "off-track."

Each student success project includes a student success team. This team includes a student success teacher, a principal or vice-principal, resource teacher, guidance teacher, and other appropriate

professional staff. This group meets weekly under the guidance of the student success teacher and reviews teachers' referrals and data from the early warning system to identify which students need additional supports. This group works closely with teachers, students, and guardians/parents to develop plans and interventions to support student success.

The SSI within Manitoba has had a positive impact on both schools and students. Schools who have participated in the project have worked together as a cohort, meeting frequently to better understand the challenges facing students within low socio-economic communities. These schools have

developed enhanced understandings of research, how to use data, and how to design supports for this group of students.

The SSI has also had a positive impact on students. Qualitative findings indicate that schools involved with this initiative are finding they have stronger attendance, fewer students "falling between the cracks," more credits being earned each year, and increasing graduation rates. Providing these strategic and targeted interventions is allowing students to move successfully towards graduation.

Through school-based interventions and supportive professional learning, success can be facilitated within low-income communities. Manitoba Education is helping to ensure that teachers, schools, and school divisions in low-income communities are better able to meet the needs of students.

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### Manitoba's Celebration of Excellence in Teaching

Minister's Awards  
2013-2014

#### Do you know an outstanding educator?

Nominations are now being accepted for Manitoba's Celebration of Excellence in Teaching—Minister's Awards, recognizing outstanding achievement by Manitoba educators in the following award categories:

- Teaching Excellence
- Outstanding New Teacher
- Team Collaboration
- Outstanding School Leader

For complete information on the nomination process and for the nomination support forms (including selection criteria), visit [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/excellence/](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/excellence/).

Submission deadline for nominations: December 10, 2013

**Manitoba** 



## School Matters Project

By Barbara Riou

**T**he School Matters Project is a provincial stay-in-school initiative. The goal of this initiative is to establish an external team of experienced educators to work with school teams to identify, develop, and implement programs and strategies designed both to address barriers to youth staying in school and to increase the success of these students.

The project was launched in November 2011 by providing ten selected schools with an overview of the Response to Intervention (RTI) model and the procedures for data collection and analysis. RTI plays an essential role in this initiative since it integrates assessment and intervention within a school-wide, multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and reduce behaviour problems. School teams use screening and progress-

monitoring data to make decisions about instruction and movement within the multi-level prevention system.

Existing school data is used to identify areas of need that can be addressed through tiered interventions. A tiered intervention approach is based on the principle that the majority of students' educational needs are met through regular instruction and supports provided by the school for all students (Tier 1), but that some students require more intensive supports (Tiers 2 and 3) based on their level of need and how the need is addressed. Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions are innovative solutions based on data gathered at the school or division level, with a focus on reducing the number of students who struggle to stay in school. School teams examine school culture, school organization, staff roles, and stakeholder engagement to develop action plans.

In the early stages of the project, it became clear to the external team that access to school data as well as the collection and use of data were significant challenges. Also clear was the danger inherent in making assumptions without considering the data, as evidenced by one school that mistakenly focused on literacy instead of numeracy in order to

increase student achievement in its school context. The external team responded to these challenges by providing guidance in deciding what historical data to collect, interpreting data, and taking action based on the data. The team also provided each school with professional learning in the form of in-services, conference calls, and research articles related to working with data, planning for technology, and time-tabling. The project schools needed support in the action-research process to develop a greater understanding of the value of using data to improve student achievement.

As a result of this initiative, each project school has had the opportunity to identify key areas that affect student participation and achievement. The ten project schools have become part of a community of learners that meet, learn, and share information regularly, with the purpose of collecting promising practices to be shared across the province. As one school team states, "We will continue with School Matters. It is no longer a project, but a part of how we do business."

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## Credit Recovery and Independent Study Option

By Susan Lee

**C**redit recovery programs help students improve their academic record, stay engaged in school, and graduate on time.

Credit recovery programs assist Senior Years students in meeting the expectations of a course for which they have received a failing grade. Rather than challenging a course multiple times, students in a credit recovery program receive

extra academic support, extended time for learning, and additional resources to help them obtain a missing credit.

Use of the Independent Study Option (ISO) is one approach to credit recovery. A wide range of curriculum-aligned, print-based courses from Grades 9 to 12 are available for in-school credit recovery programs. For \$70 (plus GST), schools can purchase reference copies of ISO courses that teachers can use to work with students. They are not intended to replace programs that are already in existence; rather, they facilitate student success by providing students with an in-school alternative to complete outcomes they previously attempted in the classroom. Assessment is provided by the in-school teachers who work directly with the students.

ISO reference copies of courses can add more flexibility to planning and learning. Reference copies of ISO courses include course materials only, and do not include examinations, answer keys, and tutor/marker services. Courses are not to be duplicated due to copyright considerations. For a list of ISO courses and for brief course descriptions, visit Manitoba Education's Distance Learning website at <[www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/dl/iso](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/dl/iso)>.

For more information about ISO courses or to place an order, contact  
Distance Learning Unit  
Fax: 204-325-1719  
Toll-free: 1-800-465-9915  
Email: [distance.learning@gov.mb.ca](mailto:distance.learning@gov.mb.ca)  
Website: [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/dl/iso](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/dl/iso)

### How to Order ISO Reference Courses

To purchase an ISO course, complete the ISO Reference Order Form available on the Distance Learning website at <[www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/dl/forms/index.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/dl/forms/index.html)>.

Payment options include the following:

- Mail cheques or money orders with the ISO Reference Order Form.
- Fax purchase orders with the ISO Reference Order Form.
- Place orders by phone using Visa or MasterCard as payment.

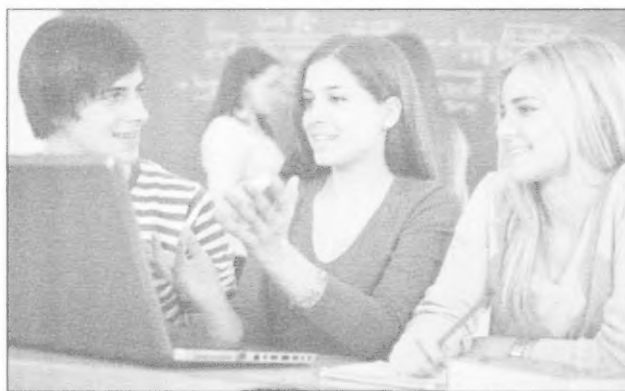
## Everybody in School Every Day

By Marlene Gregory

In March 2013, Manitoba Education, in partnership with the Manitoba Association of Parent Councils (MAPC) and school divisions, held an Attendance Fair as part of "Perfect Attendance Month." Each year in March, schools, in collaboration with parents and the community, are asked to focus on perfect attendance and strive to have every child in school every day.

The Attendance Fair included the launch of a provincial awareness campaign that focuses on the importance of regular daily attendance at school for all children. The MAPC "Everybody in School Every Day" campaign, developed in collaboration with Manitoba Education, includes posters, brochures, a video, and banners that were distributed to all schools in the province. These resources have also been released to the media and can be located on the MAPC website at <[www.mapc.mb.ca](http://www.mapc.mb.ca)>.

The 15 school divisions that participated in the attendance initiative projects presented their findings from the interventions that they implemented over the previous two years. Some of the interventions presented included relationship building, walking school bus, academic support and credit completion, incentives for improved attendance, and implementation of school-wide Positive Behaviour Interventions and Support (PBIS). Each school division



collected pre- and post-intervention data, as well as anecdotal information from students and parents, and were able to demonstrate improved attendance due to the implementation of their attendance project. Several schools included student voices as part of their project and the information they presented at the fair.

It is important that all children in Manitoba attend school every day. Regular daily attendance is closely linked to high school graduation. When schools, families, and the community work together, we will achieve our goal of "Everybody in School Every Day."

For more information about the "Everybody in School Every Day" attendance initiative, contact  
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## ARE YOU A HANDS-ON LEARNER?

Submitted by Leah Lazaruk and Megan Rodgers

These courses encourage active participation, which provides students with the opportunity to create, construct, and extend their knowledge. Course previews and descriptions are available at <[www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/dl/iso/index.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/dl/iso/index.html)>.

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**Research  
Profile**

## Enriching Mathematics Education

*By Dr. Paul Betts*

I believe that teachers' professional learning is facilitated by collaborative processes grounded in teachers' actual practice. Lesson study, a model of professional learning that is commonly practiced in Japan, is one such model that exhibits these qualities. Teachers work together by planning and observing each other's lessons, and then they use this information individually to refine their own lessons.

In my research, I have considered the importance of safe and critical collaborations in teachers' professional learning. I have found that the teacher's identity is a very important factor in relation to mathematics instruction. For example, a teacher may position herself as a confident problem solver, and so this quality is privileged when she is developing mathematics teaching practices. The importance of teacher identity complicates current calls for mathematics teachers to know mathematics more deeply. Professional learning of mathematics teaching cannot be viewed as a universal adoption of effective mathematics teaching practices because the identity of teachers varies with each individual and this identity matters a great deal.

Of particular interest to me is the potential of lesson study as a model for sustaining richer professional learning opportunities for K-8 mathematics teachers. In tension with various calls for the increased professional knowledge of teachers, I maintain that professional learning is an act of identity making within a social context, rather than merely an opportunity to learn more information about teaching. My work in teacher education is ongoing and currently is focused on pre-service

education structures that enhance the learning experiences of teacher candidates.

Other projects that I have pursued in the last 10 years include participation in CRYSTAL-funded research, in partnership with a Manitoba First Nation, to explore the intersection of mathematics learning outcomes with Aboriginal cosmology. In this work, the ancient holistic understandings of various Aboriginal cosmologies are seen as synchronous with ultramodern learning theories that are built around complexity and chaos theory. When learning and education are seen as embedded, interacting systems, one must then question the idea that teaching is a linear set of practices.

I have also worked with gifted high school students concerning their perceptions of the nature of mathematics. Gifted high school students are able to make sense of, critique, and debate various and contrary epistemological theories of the nature of mathematics. One of the main findings of this work is that the identity of learners is intricately tied up with their sense making and positioning. For example, those who tend to view mathematics negatively within their personal experiences tend to favour non-absolutist formulations of the nature of mathematics.

Inspired by my close work with teachers in schools, I am currently working on how teachers can help children who struggle to learn mathematics. Although evidence is emerging on the various cognitive mechanisms that may account for a (mathematical) learning disability or for a child's difficulty to learn mathematics, this clinical work provides little pedagogic guidance for teachers to help children. My work specifically aims to bridge the gap between clinical work and the needs of teachers by investigating possible interventions that could

be implemented within regular classroom settings to help children who struggle to learn mathematics.

My work as a teacher at the University of Winnipeg includes course work in Early and Middle Years math teaching methods and general teaching methods.

Specific to mathematics, the main goals include developing non-linear and heuristic understandings of problem solving and ways to teach them. They also include providing students with rich representations of number (which they need to develop number sense) and mitigating against math anxiety. In general, I focus on building theoretical teaching ideas from practical experiences.

**When learning and education are seen as embedded, interacting systems, one must then question the idea that teaching is a linear set of practices.**

### Profile Dr. Paul Betts

Dr. Paul Betts has worked at the University of Winnipeg since 2003, where he is currently an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education. Prior to coming to Winnipeg, he taught at Brandon University for four years while working on a Ph.D. at the University of Regina. He also taught Grades 1/2, 7/8, and 9 to 13 mathematics and science for seven years in both Manitoba and Ontario. He received his B.Ed. from York University, specializing in junior high and high school teaching of mathematics and science. He also

earned an H.B.Sc. (math major, chemistry minor) and a Master's in Mathematics while at York University in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Paul completed a Ph.D. in mathematics education in 2005. His dissertation concerned the identity making of teacher candidates while working to understand the nature of the mathematics that they will teach in elementary school. This work in pre-service teacher education has served as a foundation for several research projects considering teacher education for pre-service, beginning, and in-service teachers.



## Student Success at Ashern Central School

By Randy Chartrand

Ashern Central School, Lakeshore School Division

Four years ago, at Ashern Central School, we looked at our baseline data and found that both the number of course failures and the number of suspensions from school were too high.

We realized that if we didn't do anything differently, many of our students would continue to struggle. We needed to move from being reactive to being more proactive in implementing processes that would recognize at-risk students and those requiring appropriate adaptations. At the same time, we believed that these processes would benefit all of our students.

Ashern Central School is a Grades 5 to 12 school in the north Interlake along Highway #6. We serve seven surrounding communities, including three First Nations communities. Under the direction of our superintendent, we were recognized as a high-needs school, so extra supports were put in place to create a "success coach" teaching position. In that first year, we saw improvements in credit acquisition. We also created a proactive way to influence student behaviour. The staff began using encouraging language to emphasize "Dos" instead of "Don'ts." Students and parents were provided with "Successful Student" posters that identified the need to be respectful, to be at school, to have all needed materials, to be on time, to use class time effectively, and to be current with assignments. Subsequently, behaviour incidents decreased and fewer suspensions were administered.

Three years ago, Manitoba Education launched the Student Success Initiative

(SSI). As Ashern Central School was chosen to take part in this three-year pilot project, we created a Student Success Team, which included the vice principal (as SSI lead), guidance counselor, resource

**The key piece in this journey is to work collaboratively and openly to keep the students at the core of our conversations and decision making.**

teacher, divisional social worker, and the success coach. The focus for the Student Success Team was to identify at-risk students, and then to determine what types of interventions needed to be put in place to help them succeed.

We began by assessing all students new to our school. We formulated a credit recovery process, which would allow students to earn high school credits after the term was over. We created an at-risk referral process, whereby teachers could notify the team when students were in jeopardy. We also created a process where the Student Success Team would meet with every teacher in the school to have a face-to-face conversation twice a semester. These meetings allowed teachers to share both concerns and successes they were experiencing with their students. We began to meet as a team every Thursday

after school to discuss how students are doing, and to put into place any further needed interventions.

We have continued to demonstrate progress, as we have reduced the number of behaviour incidents reported to the office and increased credit acquisition by our high school students. It is clear from the data that the direct supports provided to students in Grades 9 and 10 have led to students requiring less direct support in Grades 11 and 12, although these supports are also provided to those students as needed.

We also created a transition process for Grade 8 students moving into high school. This year, we will have our second annual group PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope)

process. During the PATH, we host students, their parents or guardians, and their prospective teachers, and we bring in a professional facilitator to create a map of their hopes, dreams, and expectations for their journey into high school.

The key piece in this journey is to work collaboratively and openly to keep the students at the core of our conversations and decision making. The ever-increasing challenges that are present in our schools today are real, but so are the opportunities to step up and face those challenges.

Another key part of our students' success is the teachers we have in our school. Ashern Central School is a community of caring staff and students that has the will to create student success, and we strive to find ways to make that happen.

# Education

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We invite contributions to *Education Manitoba*. When forwarding submissions, please include your name and telephone number, and send materials in print and electronic formats to:

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